

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

County Council Chambers
7 Broadway Street West
Tuesday, February 17, 2009
6:05 p.m.

Present: Mayor Eddy, Councillors Wheat, Schmitt (6:10 p.m.), Haggart, Powell and Hodge.

Others: Councillors Simons and Gatward; Lance Calbeck, President, and Chuck Beech, Secretary-Treasurer, Brant Waterways Foundation.

Staff: Underwood, Ballantyne and Carman.

Councillor Wheat in the Chair.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by – Councillor Hodge
Seconded by – Councillor Powell

That the Parks and Recreation Committee special meeting agenda for February 17, 2009, be approved with the addition of delegations from Councillors Gatward and Simons.

.Carried

DELEGATIONS

Councillor Gatward provided a brief overview of the County's involvement with the TH&B trail, noting that the recommendations made by consultant Paula Neice were referred to the development of a Trails Master Plan. Although County staff is proposing a further review of the proposed specifications for the TH&B trail development, she noted that the City of Brantford staff indicate that they are pleased with the portion of the trail developed within the City utilizing these same specifications. She noted that she does not want Brant Waterways to be held up from proceeding with the trail while staff reviews the specifications. In response to comments regarding horses being allowed on the trail, Director Underwood advised that the multi-uses for the TH&B trail are to be clarified during development of the Trails Master Plan.

Councillor Simons advised that she had spoken in length with Mary Welsh of the Brant Waterways Foundation regarding this project. She requested that the final clause of the staff recommendation be removed so that the project can be approved and move forward for consideration for Federal/Provincial infrastructure funding in a timely manner.

BRANT WATERWAYS FOUNDATION FUNDING APPLICATION – TH&B RAIL CORRIDOR

Kathy Ballantyne, Parks and Facilities Manager, briefly reviewed her report supporting the Brant Waterways application for funding. She noted that County staff has had two meetings with Brant Waterways staff over the past two weeks, and has also met with Norfolk County staff to review potential issues with the trail.

The Trails Master Plan RFP process is complete and a report will be going to the February 25 Parks and Recreation Committee to approve a consultant to undertake this work. It is estimated that it will take approximately six months to complete the Trails Master Plan. Ms. Ballantyne noted that once the consultant is in place, the uses for the TH&B trail can be revisited, as this is necessary to determine the construction specifications for the trail. She pointed out that Brant Waterways has offered to provide the additional resources to do the engineering for the trail. The donation from Brant Waterways to build this trail is very positive for the community; however, Council must understand the ongoing operating and future capital costs.

Chuck Beech advised that Brant Waterways would be submitting the application for \$2 million in funding for this project, with the Brant portion of the trail estimated to cost \$1 million. If the funding application is approved, construction of the trail in Brant and Norfolk will proceed this year. If no funding is received, Brant Waterways is committed to build the Brant portion of the trail over three years, completing approximately four kilometers per year. They hope to proceed with the trail construction in the Spring of 2009.

Mayor Eddy noted his concern that the work may not be able to proceed this year if it is contingent on the consultant completing the Trails Master Plan. Director Underwood suggested that the Trails consultant could review the uses for this trail at the beginning of the Trails Master Plan project, by building on work that has already been done in this regard.

In response to a question, Chuck Beech advised that Brant Waterways wants the TH&B trail to be hard surfaced in order to expand the multi-uses, including wheelchairs and roller-blading. He referred to the experience of the Niagara Region who has asphalted their trails. He suggested that Brant Waterways is open to the possibility of a wood chip equestrian trail adjacent to the TH&B trail.

Ms. Ballantyne noted that there are short-term savings with hard-surfacing, but the costs for maintenance are more than stone dust trails over the long term. Capital upgrades will be required for hard-surfaced trails after approximately 10-15 years.

Moved by – Councillor Hodge
Seconded by – Councillor Schmitt

Whereas the Brant Waterways Foundation donated funds to the County of Brant in 2006 to acquire 12 kilometres of land formerly used as a TH&B rail line;

And whereas the Brant Waterways Foundation is prepared to assume all capital costs related to converting the County of Brant's section of the former TH&B corridor into a recreational trail;

Be it hereby resolved that the County of Brant support the Brant Waterways Foundation application for Federal / Provincial infrastructure funding to develop the TH&B rail line as a multi purpose recreational trail;

And further that Parks and Recreation staff be directed to request that the Trails Master Plan Consultant further examine the specifications and investigate all potential uses for the trail before the final specifications are determined.

.No Vote – Motion to Table Follows

Moved by – Mayor Eddy
Seconded by – Councillor Haggart

That the motion regarding the Brant Waterways application for Federal/Provincial infrastructure funding for the TH&B rail line as a multi-purpose recreational trail be tabled.

. Carried

Moved by – Mayor Eddy
Seconded by – Councillor Schmitt

That the County of Brant support the Brant Waterways Foundation application for Federal / Provincial infrastructure funding to develop the TH&B rail line as a multi purpose recreational trail.

. Carried

ADJOURNMENT AND NEXT MEETING

The meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m., to meet again on Wednesday, February 25, 2009 at 7:00 p.m., Council Chambers, Paris.

Secretary